

BLISSFIELD

NOVEMBER 2005
VOL. 11 NO. 4

VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

NEWS OF IMPORTANCE

Recreation Program Update

The fall season of recreation sports is winding down. Fall soccer continued to hold steady with approximately 170 children participating in the program from Pre-K to fourth grade. The soccer program also currently sponsors 4 traveling teams that compete in a league with the cities of Adrian, Tecumseh, and Lenawee Christian schools. Also, for the first time, the Recreation Department sponsored a men's team that competed in the Adrian City League. If any men would like information on the team for the spring season, contact the Recreation Department. The teams moved to Ellis Park during the fall season as the fields at the Blissfield Middle School are being renovated.

Cheerleading and flag football were two other sports that were contested this fall. The flag football games were played on the Blissfield varsity football practice field and the cheerleading squads cheered for the appropriate age team. These two programs are designed for the first- through fourth-grade level and are used to expose the child to the sport and to teach basic game rules. The numbers to these programs continued to hold steady also at approximately 160 children combined.

The Recreation Department also sponsored the fifth-grade and sixth-grade tackle football traveling programs and fifth- and sixth-grade cheer teams. These individuals participated in a six-team league throughout Michigan and Ohio. The numbers con-

tinued to grow for these programs. The numbers for the fifth-grade team became so large this year that two different teams had to be formed from Blissfield. These teams played on the current varsity field at the high school on Saturday afternoons.

The "Music in the Park" series concluded with a concert by the rock band "Alaris" on Saturday, Sept. 17, 2005. It was a well attended concert. The Recreation Department would like to hear suggestions from the public concerning the music series. This is the second year of the concerts with the performance date being changed from 2004. In 2004, three concerts were held on Wednesday evenings. A suggestion was made to change the concerts in 2005 to a Friday evening. Two of the four Friday evening dates were poorly attended, and the Recreation Department would like to hear your thoughts as how to improve the music series.

The Recreation Department is currently making plans with the Blissfield Jaycees to again hold the "Breakfast with Santa" in early December and the Daddy/Daughter Dance in February. Watch for children to bring a flyer home from school for these events.

Several ideas have come forward from local citizens of what they would like to see the Recreation Department develop. If you have any ideas, please feel free to contact Al Navarro at the Village Office. Starting in November, Al will be in the office between the hours of 2 and 4 p.m.

BIG PROJECTS

Franklin St., Etc. Street Project Repairs

In late September, several repairs were made to work that was done in 2004 as part of the Franklin St., etc. street/utility project. These repairs included the replacement of various pieces of sidewalk and driveway approaches. The repairs also included the replacement of pavement on Monroe St. (between Beagle Rd. and Maple St.), Maple St. (Monroe St. to the bend), and River St. (Maple St. to Case St.). These repairs, while a temporary inconvenience at the time, were necessary due to premature deterioration of the pavement and concrete.

The repairs will ultimately be paid for by the contractor, as part of the "Maintenance and Guaranty Bond" that they were required to have as part of the project. The repairs seem to be completed for now, and we hope that no further repairs will be needed. We are, however, keeping an eye on the project area, just in case further repair work may need to be done.

Storm Water Infiltration Elimination Program

Our work on reducing unlawful storm-water connections to our sanitary sewer system continues. This year, we have been focusing on completing the surveys and inspections on the east side of the River Raisin. Next year, we will complete the surveys and inspections on the

west side of the River Raisin. In any event, any identified repairs will need to be made by Nov. 15, 2006.

Once this program is completed, we should also be done with the last sewer study that the state required of our system. That means that by the end of next year (2006), we should be 100 percent completed with our state-mandated sewer separation program.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Playground Committee Progress

Work continues in the boundless playground at Bachmayer Little League Field. While it is almost ready for children to play on, there are still components that need to be purchased and installed. Therefore, the playground committee is still taking donations and contributions of time, materials, and (most importantly) funds. If you can help, please call Billie Patton (486-5599), or Barb McHenry (486-5544).

Skateboard Park Update

Planning and fund-raising for the planned skateboard park in Ellis Park continues. The park will be located on the former tennis courts, but we will keep the basketball courts where they are. The skateboard park committee hopes to be able to build the park in 2006. If you can donate or contribute, please call Lori Barnes (443-5486).

SCHULTZ-HOLMES LIBRARY NEWS

FOOD FOR FINES

Our annual collection of cans or boxes of nonperishable food items will begin Saturday, Nov. 19, and continue through to Friday, Dec. 30. Food for Fines is the library's campaign to encourage the return of overdue items and at the same time help provide food for Christmas baskets that are distributed by the Knights of Columbus to Blissfield area families. All you have to do is return the overdue books and/or magazines with a food item. Sorry, Food for Fines does not apply to unpaid fines for items you have returned in the past, nor can food items be used to pay unique management fees. If you have any questions please call the library at 486-2858.



LIBRARY BOARD

The Village is searching for a citizen to be appointed to fill a vacancy on the Library Board. The Library Board members are elected positions, but it is currently necessary to make an appointment to fill a vacancy due to a recent resignation. The Board meets once a month on the third Thursday at 4 p.m. The members are paid a small annual stipend.

Interested citizens should send a letter, outlining their interest in the appointment and their qualifications and philosophies regarding the Library, to the Blissfield Village Office, Attn: James Wonacott, 408 E. Adrian St., P.O. Box 129, Blissfield, MI 49228. Questions should be directed to Mr. Wonacott at 486-4347.

TAX FORMS

Federal tax forms should be available at the library in January. State tax forms will not be available until February. Because of "continued decline in demand for paper forms" we will be receiving fewer forms. Both state and federal forms are on line, the federal at <http://www.irs.gov> and the state at <http://www.michigan.gov/treasury>.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Schultz-Holmes Memorial Library card catalog is now accessible from your home computer. Now you can search for books and see which books are available in the Lenawee County Library system, all from the comfort of your own home. To access the card catalog:

1. Go to the website <http://catalog.lenawee.lib.mi.us>.
2. From the tabs on the top right, click on search.
3. Use the search tabs on the left to search for books, magazines, CDs, books on tape, videos, and/or DVDs.

LIBRARY HOURS

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY, and SATURDAY

— 10:30 AM TO 5 PM

TUESDAY, THURSDAY

— 1 TO 8 PM

**THE LIBRARY WILL BE CLOSED NOV. 24 AND 25 FOR
THANKSGIVING**

**DEC. 24 AND 26 FOR CHRISTMAS
AND DEC. 31 AND JAN. 2 FOR NEW YEAR'S**

Susan Berryman, Library Director
Phone 486-2858, Fax 486-3565

DDA NEWS

Happy Fall!

As I look out of my office window, I see the bustle of this busy village. Fall is in the air and scarecrows are everywhere! My first four months on the job have been full of completing projects as well as implementing new things (One of the newly implemented programs is fall decorations and scarecrows located throughout the village). Thanks to everyone who has participated in making the village look festive for autumn. A special thanks to Ron Thompson for putting up the corn husks around downtown.

We have had some new appointments on the Downtown Development Authority Board, as well as a new Chairman (Dave Bailey from D&N Upholstery). Newly appointed to the board are Jeff Juby (Attorney-at-Law), Michelle Prowant (owner of Curves), and Dale Wotring (from Knapp Motors). All are village residents.

I have conducted Blissfield Merchant & Downtown Business meetings. We have been meeting monthly to discuss current events and promotions. This is an opportunity to let me know what is happening at your business, both results and rewards. It's a good brainstorming session, provides good information, and is an opportunity for all business owners to voice their concerns. Attendance is growing and I'd invite you to attend these meetings each month. Make it a priority! The meetings are usually the third Wednesday morning of the month, at 9 a.m. at the Chamber office.

We have approved Facade Improvement Grant projects this year totaling \$26,740 in private improvements; costing the DDA \$5,939 in grants. We still are working on sidewalk improvements, beautification of the central business district, and providing resources to acquire new business and restore and preserve existing buildings downtown.

New banners for downtown are here and will be going up after the holidays. We also have a new website up and running. Visit www.blissfield-dda.com. This website is an awesome vehicle for finding things in Blissfield, especially if you are relocating to the area.

I'm also working on the ongoing promotional activities in the DDA district such as the Chamber of Commerce's Yuletide Open House on Nov. 11-13, the DDA tree lighting and Santa Parade on Friday, Nov. 11, at 7 p.m., and the Parade of Lights on Friday, Dec. 9 at 6:30 p.m. All of these activities will attract people to our business district merchants.

Among the top priorities, of course, is to continue to implement the recommendations from the 2002 Hyett-Palma Report. This is the DDA's blueprint for economic growth and I want to help implement new development that will come to the Village of Blissfield in the near future.

Shelly Woods
Executive Director
Downtown Development Authority

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS CALL 486-4347

Who's Who in Village Government

Village President: Jae Guetschow

Village Trustees: Klaus Bachmann, Jamie Creps, Margaret Goble, Mike Gunter, Vicki Lombard, Ed Rinke

Administrator: Jim Wonacott (486-4347)

Clerk: Laura Neuman (486-4347)

Treasurer: Peggy Nieman (486-4347)

DPW: Mark Strahan (486-2550)

Water Plant: Kipp Scott (486-3350)

Sewer Plant: Rick Frantz (486-2740)

Police: Jane Kelley (486-4340)

Zoning: Jennifer Tracy (486-4347)

Library: Sue Berryman (486-2858)

Library Board: Dan Crots

Planning Commission: Greg Karmol

DDA: Dave Bailey

Swimming Pool: Emily Koppelman (486-4433)

Parks and Rec. Board: Jerry Hayes Jr.

Recreation Coordinator: Al Navarro (486-2610)

Building Inspector: Roger Roach (517-486-4347)

Plumbing Inspector: Ken Schaedler (486-3902)

Mechanical Inspector: Ken Schaedler (486-3902)

Electrical Inspector: Dave Wilcox (419-466-1499)

Village/Schools Tennis Court Project

Both the Village Council and School Board have approved a lease agreement so the Village can construct tennis courts on school property. Now that that has occurred, planning is underway to construct those courts. We are seeking an engineer to design the courts, and we plan to actually build them first thing in the spring.

We are planning on up to four courts at this time, and hope to be able to light the courts at some point. The courts will be located in the northwest corner of the school's campus (northwest of the Middle School).

Business hours in Village Government.

- Village Office — Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Police Department — Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. (Officers are on shift at all times and may or may not be in the office at any time).
- Schultz-Holmes Library — Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Tuesday, Thursday 1-8 p.m.
- Department of Public Works — Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (Crewmembers are usually out on job sites).
- Water Treatment Plant — 7 days/week, 6:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Lab: Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Wastewater Treatment Plant — Monday-Friday 6:30 a.m.-3 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday 6-8 a.m.
- Village parks — 7 a.m.-11:30 p.m.

Fiscal Year 2005-06 Village Budget

The following charts outline the Village Budget for this fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2005-Sept. 30, 2006):

EXPENDITURES

a. General government: \$366,620.00	10.1%
b. Police department: \$485,270.00	13.4%
c. Library: \$188,280.00	5.2%
d. Parks and recreation: \$150,930.00	4.2%
e. Forestry: \$81,710.00	2.3%
f. Streets: \$559,460.00	15.4%
g. Water/sewer: \$1,372,160.00	37.9%
h. Garbage and recycling: \$15,630.00	0.4%
i. Vehicles and equipment: \$126,380.00	3.5%
j. Building inspection: \$42,920.00	1.2%
k. DDA: \$142,950.00	3.9%
l. Fund balances: \$89,339.00	2.5%
m. Total: \$3,621,649.00	100.0%

REVENUES

a. Property taxes: \$1,292,969.00	35.7%
b. State revenues: \$552,500.00	15.3%
c. Utility sales: \$1,327,000.00	36.6%
d. Other (fees, interest, etc.): \$449,180.00	12.4%
f. Totals: \$3,621,649.00	100.0%

Revised Fee/Rate Schedule

As part of the budget approval process for this year's budget, we determined that we had to raise some of the various fees and rates that the Village charges. These fees include water and sewer tap fees, zoning applications, water/sewer rates, and other similar fees and rates. We raised these fees by a factor of 3 percent (the inflation rate); so that the fees and rates would cover the increased costs of the services they are for. We apologize for any inconvenience these fee/rate increases may cause, but they are necessary to cover our costs.

Village Office Holiday Hours

The Village Office will be closed for the following holidays:

- a. Thanksgiving: Thursday, Nov. 24, and Friday, Nov. 25.**
- b. Christmas: Friday, Dec. 23, and Monday, Dec. 26.**
- c. New Year's: Friday, Dec. 30, and Monday, Jan. 2.**

Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance Review

The Planning Commission has just about completed their revisions to the Village's Comprehensive Plan. They will be sending the draft plan out for public and organizational review and comment very soon. Once announced, copies of the plan will be available at the Village Office. If you are interested, please attend the public hearings when they are scheduled, and voice your opinion. The notices for these hearings will be published in the Blissfield Advance. Once the review and comment process is complete in early 2006, the Planning Commission will send the draft plan to the Village Council for formal approval.

Once the Village Council approves the new Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission will then have to review the Village's Zoning Ordinance and map. This will need to be done in order to make sure that they do and say what they need to, given the revised Comprehensive Plan.

There will be further public hearings scheduled if the Zoning Ordinance and/or Map do end up needing any changes. As with the notices for the revised Comprehensive plan, these notices will be published in the Blissfield Advance.

VILLAGE SERVICES

Fall Leaf Collection

We have started our fall leaf collection program for this year. We plan to pick up leaves through the week of November 28, and follow this general schedule:

- a. Monday, Tuesday: East of river, South of U.S. 223.
- b. Wednesday: East of river, north of U.S. 223.
- c. Thursday: West of river, north of U.S. 223.
- d. Friday: West of river, south of U.S. 223.

Snow Plowing

With winter almost here, it's time to start thinking about snow plowing. The Village will plow and salt all public streets this year, as in years past. We will also continue to plow the public sidewalks, as well as the public parking lots downtown. Generally, we try to plow the major streets (i.e. Lane St., Jefferson St., Depot St., Monroe St., U.S. 223, etc.) first. After that, we plow the side streets, and finish the downtown area. The sidewalks are the last things we plow.

Please be patient with us. We try to plow the snow as soon as possible after it gets 1" to 2" deep, depending on the situation. If the snow is deep enough to plow (1" to 2" or more), vehicles should be removed from the street to facilitate plowing. Also, depending on the severity of the snowfall, it takes us anywhere from 5-10 hours to plow all of the streets once. We do not deliberately "plow in" any driveways that residents have already cleaned out. It is an unavoidable matter of timing. We apologize, in advance, for any inconveniences that may occur. Also, please do not plow the snow from your driveway into the street.

Brush Pick-up

Due to leaf pick-up, there is no brush collection in November. Brush pick-up will resume in December, with pick-ups being done on the second Tuesday of each month (Dec. 13, Jan. 10, and Feb. 14). Twice-monthly service will resume in March (March 14). Remember, to place your brush out at the street, it must be in the right-of-way; directly in front of your property; be 8' or less in length; be stacked relatively neatly and not be placed around poles, signs, etc.; and can't have any construction debris, grass, weeds, or other lawn refuse mixed in with the brush.

Discolored Water

On a few occasions, some Village residents have experienced discolored water from the Village's water system lately. While completely safe to drink, the water is definitely unsightly. We have made a couple of adjustments to the treatment processes at the Water Plant that we think should take care of the problem. In addition, we have just completed a thorough re-flushing of our fire hydrants, which should also help in the matter.

Please keep in mind that some minor discoloration (a rusty red or orange color) is not uncommon while we are flushing hydrants. Running your tap for just a few seconds or minutes usually takes care of that problem. What is unusual is for the discoloration to happen so soon after they were flushed (last May). We have identified the cause, and have taken steps to correct it. We apologize for any inconvenience that the situation may have caused, and we are trying to see that it doesn't happen again in the future.

It's Christmas Time Again Christmas Tree Collection

The DPW will again be collecting Christmas trees (after Christmas). Residents of the Village may drop off their trees at the DPW yard (103 N. Lane St.) between Dec. 26 and Jan. 9. The DPW will also conduct curbside pick-up the week of Jan. 9 (as part of regular brush pick-up).

POLICE NEWS

You may have heard that Michigan has a new Abandoned Vehicle Law that went into effect Oct. 1, 2005. Most portions of the law do not apply to private citizens, but are more procedural for law enforcement and towing companies. However, there are a couple of sections that may apply to you. I will use this column to share that information with you.

The law attempts to address the problem of new owners not transferring a vehicle title at the Secretary of State Office into their name. The new law requires that the seller of a motor vehicle, other than a licensed dealer, do one of the following:

1) Accompany the purchaser to the Secretary of State Office to assure the title is transferred; OR

2) Maintain a record of the sale for at least 18 months. The record can be a photocopy of the reassigned title or a bill of sale that includes name, address, driver license number, purchaser's signature, the purchase price, and date of sale.

The vehicle information such as year, make, and VIN should also be on it. I suggest that you keep the bill of sale longer than 18 months with your other important papers.

Failure to comply could result in a civil infraction. It could also result in the owner of record being liable for towing and storage fees, if the purchaser does not transfer the title. The new law also allows a law enforcement agency the option of charging the owner with Littering.

When a law enforcement agency or towing company removes an abandoned vehicle, we must notify the Secretary of State Office. That office will make the information available to the public on a website and will send a notice to the last titled owner. The owner has 20 days from the date on the notice to redeem the vehicle. If the vehicle is not claimed, it will be sold.

How does a vehicle get towed as abandoned or scrap? If a vehicle with a plate is left on a State Highway for more than 18 hours, or if a vehicle with or without a plate is left for 48 hours on other public property (Village streets or public parking lots, for example), it is considered abandoned. The Blissfield Police Department will place an orange sticker on a car notifying the owner before it is towed. If a vehicle is left on private property without the owner's permission, it can be towed without a waiting period. The property owner needs to contact a towing company to make arrangements.

The Village of Blissfield also has an ordinance which addresses the "Storage of dismantled, partially dismantled, or inoperable motor vehicles or parts thereof." Vehicles that fit that description can not be stored on private property for more than 48 hours within the village unless they are kept in a "wholly enclosed garage or other wholly enclosed structure." Noncompliance can result in the owner being charged with a violation and the vehicle being towed.

We all want Blissfield to remain a beautiful town. Abandoned or Junk Vehicles only detract from that goal. Please do your part by not storing inoperable vehicles in yards, streets or parking lots. If you do, you may be contacted or see a bright orange sticker attached to it.

As always, if you have any questions about this new law, or any concerns about the Police Department, please call or stop in at the office.

Chief Jane K. Kelley



BLISSFIELD

VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

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NOVEMBER 2005

phone: (517) 486-4347 email: blissadm@cass.net website: www.blissfieldmichigan.gov

Village Board Meeting Schedules

Village Council meetings	7 p.m.	Dec. 12, Jan. 9, 23, Feb. 13, 27	Library
Council committee meetings	7 p.m.	Dec. 19, Jan. 16, Feb. 20	Village Office
Planning Commission	7 p.m.	Dec. 5, Jan. 3, Feb. 6	Library
DDA	7 p.m.	Dec. 14, Jan. 11, Feb. 8	Library
Parks and Recreation	7 p.m.	Jan. 5	Library
Library Board	4 p.m.	Dec. 15, Jan. 19, Feb. 16	Library

Possible New Village Office

Earlier this year, we had the buildings on the Village's new property near the entrance to Ellis Park demolished. Due to space limitations, the lack of handicapped accessibility at the current Village Office, and recommendations in the 2002 Hyett-Palma Report, we hope to be able to build a new Village Office (with administrative offices, the Police Department, and Council/board meeting facilities) on that site, beginning in 2006. To that end, we have begun looking for an architect to work with us in the design and construction supervision of the new building.

This new building will not cost any Village taxpayer

any additional taxes. The estimated up to \$1,200,000 price tag for the new facility will be funded through a Capital Improvement Bond. The bond will probably be sold in late winter or early spring of 2006. The annual payments for this bond will be paid back through existing revenue sources. We are also seeking foundation grants to help with the project. In addition, once the new facility is built and we have moved into it, we intend to sell the existing Village office building.

If you have any questions about this project, please give us a call and tour our current office building. Once you do so, we think you will understand why this project is necessary.